



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: November 7, 2011

TO: Members of the Natural Resources and Culture Committee

FROM: Alex Ruiz, Assistant Public Utilities Director – Business Support Branch

SUBJECT: Use of Temporary Fire Hydrant Construction Meters/SDG&E Sunrise Powerlink

At the September 28, 2011, meeting of the Natural Resources and Culture Committee, non-agenda public comment was taken from Mr. John Pilch, a resident of the San Carlos community. Mr. Pilch's comments centered on an objection to private water trucks filling up at fire hydrants in the San Carlos community. These private water trucks are providing water for the SDG&E Sunrise Powerlink construction project, currently underway in the east county. Particular objections articulated by Mr. Pilch included:

- 1) The use of drinking water for construction purposes, especially since the City just ended its drought declaration;
- 2) The increased volume of trucks (5-12) parked on Lake Murray Blvd waiting to fill up; and
- 3) The damage to roadways, and associated nuisance these trucks cause in the neighborhood.

Mr. Pilch requested an investigation by City Council to see what permits were required prior to the use of the fire hydrants and to confirm there are "no other ways to handle this." He also noted that recycled water in Santee could easily be accessed and suggested that the trucks be directed there for their water supply needs. Finally, Mr. Pilch wanted SDG&E to immediately cease and desist until a new plan is developed.

The Public Utilities Department provides the following in response to the issues raised.

1. Use of Drinking Water of Construction Purposes

The use of drinking water from a temporary fire hydrant connection is consistent with existing Council policy, department policy and practice. The City recognizes that in order to meet dust suppression, soil compaction and other construction site regulations, water is needed. This water is usually supplied through a fire hydrant meter since there is typically no existing water

infrastructure in place at these construction sites. The decision as to where a contractor fills up water trucks is not something the Public Utilities Department has control over, unless it creates an impact to the water system itself. In this case, there are no issues associated with the water system. The water used by construction contractors is metered and billed consistent with other utility customers.

Mr. Pilch raised concern that the City's recent drought experience should necessitate a restriction on the use of fire hydrant meters. However, we note that the current Municipal Code provisions associated with Emergency Water Regulations (SDMC 67.3801-3811) only limit the availability of fire hydrant meters at a "Level 3" Drought Emergency.

2. Increased Volume of Trucks Waiting to Fill Up on Lake Murray

In an effort to partially address these concerns, contractors working on behalf of SDG&E, recently requested the installation of fire hydrant meters at three different locations: Lake Murray and Lake Alamor (near the intersection of Jackson and Lake Murray); Bisby Lake and Bashan Lake; and Bisby Lake and Lake Gaby Ave. These last two locations are behind the Albertson's grocery store located at 8650 Lake Murray Blvd.. These three meters will be larger in size and therefore capable of flowing more water quickly and more reliably than the two existing smaller fire hydrant meters. This should reduce the number of trucks waiting to fill up at any given time.

3. The Damage to Roadways, and Associated Nuisance

SDG&E and its contractors have committed to repairing any damage, if any, caused by contracted water trucks to the Lake Murray Boulevard Frontage Road upon completion of the Sunrise Powerlink project in mid-2012.

Further, SDG&E and its contractors will commit to repairing the area of Lake Murray Boulevard Frontage Road and Lake Aldon Drive and the area of Lake Murray Boulevard Frontage Road and Jackson Drive on a quarterly basis for the duration of the project.

Truck traffic is a nuisance. This is an issue wherever fire hydrant meters are installed. However, this nuisance is balanced against the ability to provide private contractor access to water in order to meet construction site regulations and other requirements. The Fire Hydrant Construction Meter program is administered with this balance in mind.

Additional Response

The Public Utilities Department has reviewed the records associated with the provision of fire hydrant meters in the San Carlos area. In each instance, fire hydrant meters were provided consistent with existing policy and fully met all criteria, including payment of fees and charges. The Department processes approximately 450 similar fire hydrant meter requests per year City-wide.

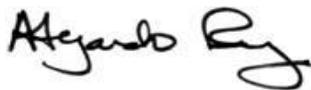
Finally, Mr. Pilch suggests that the contractor use recycled water available from the Padre Dam Municipal Water District (Padre Dam) located in the City of Santee. It is our understanding that SDG&E has discussed the use of recycled water provided by Padre Dam, and that at least initial information indicated recycled water could be available for use by SDG&E. However, we are not aware of the specifics regarding this discussion, and the City does not have the ability to deny water service based on the availability of water through an alternate service provider.

We also note that SDG&E has proposed utilizing a recycled water “filling station” which would be constructed, at their cost, at the City’s South Bay Water Reclamation Plant. SDG&E’s consultant submitted plans and an engineering report covering their proposed filling station and recycled water use sites throughout the County. The plans and engineering report have been approved by the Public Utilities Department, County Department of Environmental Health and State Department of Public Health. As of October 2011, SDG&E has the following outstanding items to complete prior to constructing the Recycled Water Fill Station:

- Building Permit along with environmental clearance from the City of San Diego Development Services Department (DSD). City staff members have completed their reviews for the Building Permit, including environmental reviews. All the reviewers have signed off; however, a Building Permit has not been issued. SDG&E will need to pay fees before a permit will be issued.
- Right of Entry Permit to use the City Facilities from City of San Diego Real Estate Assets Department. SDG&E is currently conducting a second review of the permit related documents.

Concurrently, SDG&E is applying for a waiver from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, as their recycled water use isn’t covered by the City’s Master Reclamation Permit since they are using the water outside our approved hydrologic basins, essentially outside the City of San Diego limits. Still pending is SDG&E’s submission of a “Notice of Intent” to enroll under the Regional Water Quality Control Board’s waiver program and the Regional Board’s approval of the waiver application.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.



Alex Ruiz
Assistant Public Utilities Director
Business Support Branch

cc: Jay Goldstone, Chief Operating Officer
Roger S. Bailey, Director of Public Utilities
Almis Udrys, Deputy Director, Mayor’s Office of Intergovernmental Relations
Jim Fisher, Assistant Public Utilities Department Director – Water Operations Branch